T O U R I S M

VISITOR '87

A TRAVEL SURVEY OF VISITORS TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

PEACE RIVER-ALASKA TOURISM REGION

ECONOMIC & REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

Canada

BC

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PEACE RIVER - ALASKA TOURISM REGION

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The responsibility for the content of this report is the consultant's alone, and the conclusions reached herein, do not necessarily reflect the opinions of those who assisted during the course of this investigation or the federal and provincial governments which funded the study.

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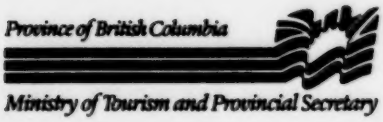

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BRITISH COLUMBIA TOURISM REGIONS
CASSIAR
FORT NELSON
H
Peace River, Alaska Highway
ALASKA
FORT ST. JOHN
DAWSON CREEK
G
North by Northwest
PRINCE RUPERT
QUEEN CHARLOTTE CITY
PRINCE GEORGE
ALBERTA
QUESNEL
F
Cariboo
E
High Country
WILLIAMS LAKE
GOLDEN
100 MILE HOUSE
KAMLOOPS
SALMON ARM
RADIUM HOT SPRINGS
Vancouver Island
PORT HARDY
A
B
South-western B.C.
C
Okan agan-Similk ameen
VERNON
D
Kootenay Country
I
Rocky Mountain
CAMPBELL RIVER
PORT ALBERNI
NELSON
VANCOUVER
RICHMOND
NANAIMO
PENTICTON
CRANBROOK
VICTORIA
U.S.A.
A Vancouver Island
B Southwestern B.C.
C Okanagan-Similkameen
D Kootenay Country
E High Country
F Cariboo
G North by Northwest
H Peace River, Alaska Highway
I Rocky Mountain

INTRODUCTION

Visitors '87 is a survey of out-of-province visitors to British Columbia conducted during the period of JuLY to October, 1987. It was undertaken to provide a measure of the numbers of people visiting the province during the summer and fall travel period, and to describe the characteristics and profiles of these visitors. It is the first province wide survey of tourists to British Columbia since 1979.

Visitors '87 involved the surveying of travellers arriving in B.C. at major highways, airports and marine terminals. The survey involved "screening" interviews with representatives of 13,743 travel parties entering B.C., or about 1% of total visitor traffic during the survey period. These parties were comprised of 2,940 excursionists (same-day travellers) and 10,803 tourists (one-or-more night travellers) or visitor parties.

Trip diaries were given to 3 out of 4 visitor parties and these travellers were asked to complete the diary on a daily basis and mail it to Survey Headquarters on the completion of their trip. Response rates of 40% were achieved resulting in 3,225 completed diaries representing over 20,000 party-nights spent in British Columbia. One out of four overnighting visitors were asked for their name and phone number, and a detailed follow-up interview was conducted by telephone (for North American visitors) and in airport departure lounges (for overseas visitors). A total of 1,005 of these interviews were completed.

The results of the personal interviews, telephone interviews and diary questionnaires were analysed and the results published in a provincial report entitled Visitors '87. To provide additional details at the regional level, nine separate reports were prepared - one for each tourist region - of which this is one.

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

This report contains a summary of the most often asked questions about non-resident travel to the region. The tables have been set up to provide a variety of information in a concise, tabular format. In all cases, the formats are similar, with a breakdown of responses into three origin categories, a regional total, and a B.C. total.

The three origin categories of Canada, U.S.A. and International provide a comparison among the residents of these areas, which is intended to guide marketing programs. The regional figures and the B.C. figures allow convenient comparisons between the status of the region and the provincial average.

In all cases percentages have been reported. These percentages are intended to add vertically to 100% (in the case of non-multiple responses). In other words, the distribution of responses in each column can be compared to the percentages in the other columns. For example, the number of nights spent in the region by Canadians can be compared to the number of nights spent by Americans or by residents from offshore countries.

To keep the charts uncongested, the actual counts have not been tabulated. However, the counts (representing the number of parties) can be calculated using the figures provided in this report. The following chart tabulates the number of parties visiting each region from each of the three origin categories. Multiplying the appropriate figure from this chart by any percentage in the same origin category will provide a measure of the actual number of visitor parties.

The reader is cautioned that this chart can be used with all exhibits except those recording accommodation and activities. These are measured in party-nights and the appropriate total counts are tallied as Total Party-Nights (in hundreds).

FACTORS TO CALCULATE
ACTUAL NUMBERS OF TRAVEL PARTIES
FROM PERCENTAGES

(During July-October, 1987)

REGION	CANADA	USA	INT'L	REGION
Vancouver Island	106,000	330,000	48,000	484,000
S.W. B.C.	247,000	407,000	128,000	782,000
Okanagan	116,000	81,000	30,000	227,000
Kootenay Country	37,000	24,000	4,000	65,000
B.C. Rockies	145,000	122,000	23,000	290,000
High Country	111,000	127,000	45,000	283,000
Cariboo	7,000	40,000	10,000	55,000
North by Northwest	16,000	59,000	14,000	89,000
Peace River	9,000	35,000	4,000	48,000
B.C. Total	524,000	855,000	156,000	1,355,000

Visitors '87 has generated a vast amount of information about travel to British Columbia and travel within the region. To assist in the task of analysing the results on a regional basis, a series of the key results have been presented.

The following pages contain: a summary explanation of the regional results; a series of twelve tables describing various features about travel to the region; breakdowns of origins into categories of Canada, U.S.A. and International visitors; a comparison to 1979 results; and a summary of what visitors enjoyed most about the region.

In all the tables, the column percentage is quoted to the nearest whole number. The reader is advised to be cautious in interpreting an undue amount of precision in the numbers as statistical reliability varies for each entry in each table. Regional totals are considered accurate to within 3% to 5%, while individual elements in the exhibits have an error factor in the 5% to 20% range.

The reader is also cautioned to recognize the following points when using the report:

- The units of measurement represent number of parties, unless party-nights are specified;

- The survey was conducted solely of non-B.C. residents, as they entered the province between June 21 and October 31, 1987. This 4+ month period represents approximately 52% of total visitor traffic to B.C.;

- Travel by B.C. residents is not included in this survey. Domestic travel is estimated to represent about 45% of total B.C. tourism;

- Consequently, the survey represents between 25% and 30% of B.C. tourism.

For further information regarding the methodology and results of Visitors '87, please contact:

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HIGHLIGHTS

NON-RESIDENT TOURISM IN THE PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

In 1987, there were about 156,000 party-nights spent by non B.C. residents in the Peace River-Alaska Highway tourist region during the period from late June to the end of October. The Peace River region represents approximately 2% of the provincial visitor party-nights total.

The total number of parties visiting the Peace River region during the four month survey period was 48,000. Americans made up the largest market share at 74%, followed by Canadians at 19% and International visitors at 7%. The average length of stay was 3.3 nights.

Over half of travellers to the Peace River (52%) preferred to travel by private vehicle. This was followed by the use of an R.V. (42%) and then plane (9%).

Seven out of ten visitors indicated that touring was the main reason for their trip. Visiting friends and relatives, wilderness trip and an outdoors trip were the main reasons given for their trip to the Peace River by three out of ten visitors.

The average party size was 2.7, while the most common party composition was two adults travelling together.

The majority of visitors to the Peace River-Alaska Highway region had been to B.C. before as three out of four indicated this was not their first trip.

Three-quarters of visitors to the region did not attend Expo 86.

The preferred accommodation used by visitors was camping - cited by seven out of ten visitors. Next most popular were motels at 16%.

Visitors to the region spent an average of $91 per party and $34 per person per day. The single biggest expenditure at $34 daily was auto transportation followed by accommodation at $16 daily.

Total non-resident tourist revenue generated in the Peace River region during the July to October period was $12.6 million. This represents about 1% of the total out-of-province visitor expenditure in the province during the summer-fall period.

NUMBER OF NIGHTS SPENT IN THE PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

NIGHTS	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
1	8%	3%	-	4%	11%
2	11	8	-	8	16
3	9	23	-	19	19
4	19	14	-	14	12
5-7	22	22	18%	22	19
8-10	8	17	7	15	10
11-15	21	10	75	17	11
16-20	4	-	-	1	-
20 and over	-	-	-	1	-
Row Percentage	19%	73%	8%	100%	100%

- Length of stay was greatest for residents of countries outside North America, while the regional average was 3.3 nights, compared to the provincial average of 5.7 nights.
- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the total parties were Americans.
- International visitors tended to stay in the region a relatively long time (three quarters stayed over eleven nights), due to the distance travelled and the likelihood of these visitors visiting friends and relatives in the area.

IS B.C. THE MAJOR DESTINATION OF VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION?

RESPONSE	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
No	29%	89%	67%	76%	38%
Yes	71	11	33	25	62
Row Percentage	20%	73%	8%	100%	100%

- B.C. was the main destination for only one-quarter (25%) of visitors to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Region compared to the B.C. average of more than six out of ten visitors.
- B.C. was much more likely to be the main destination for Canadian visitors to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Region (71%) than for Americans (11%). This probably reflects the importance of Alaska as the destination.

METHOD OF TRAVEL TO B.C.
OF VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

MODE OF TRANSPORT	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
Own Automobile	82%	48%	17%	52%	48%
Rented Automobile	-	-	-	-	8
R.V.	16	53	17	42	14
Bus	-	-	-	-	3
Plane	-	5	73	9	30
Train	-	-	-	-	1
Cruise	-	-	-	-	4
Ferry	-	7	-	5	11
Other	6	1	-	2	1
Row Percentage	20%	72%	8%	100%	100%

- Private automobiles were the preferred mode of transportation to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Region at 52% followed closely by recreational vehicles at 42%. Both were significantly higher than the provincial average.
- Automobiles were particularly popular among Canadians (82%) versus 48% for Americans.
- Recreational vehicles were used by 53% of Americans, while only 16% of Canadians used this form of transportation.

METHOD OF TRAVEL IN B.C.
OF VISITORS IN THE PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

MODE OF TRANSPORT	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
Own Automobile	72%	56$	38%	58%	50%
Rented Automobile	4	3	40	7	20
R.V.	18	47	30	40	15
Bus	15	1	20	6	11
Plane	-	-	13	1	3
Train	-	-	-	-	3
Cruise	-	2	-	-	3
Ferry	19	2	-	5	17
Other	7	1	-	2	13
Row Percentage	20%	71%	9%	119%	133%

- Automobiles continued to be the most popular form of transportation in the Peace River-Alaska Highway Region, comprising nearly two-thirds of transportation use (totalling private and rented auto categories).

- Personal automobiles were particularly popular among Canadians (72%) while rental vehicles were highest among International visitors (40%).

- Recreational vehicle (R.V.) use was particularly popular among American residents (47%).

MAIN PURPOSE OF TRIP OF VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

MAIN TRIP PURPOSE	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
Business	8%	7%	-	7%	10%
Conference	5	2	-	3	5
Visit Friends/Relatives	52	22	43%	30	38
Touring Trip	52	75	67	70	56
City Trip	-	3	-	2	11
Personal	-	14	-	10	6
Outdoors Trip	17	34	20	29	20
Wilderness/Adventure	4	33	70	30	10
Resort	20	1	13	6	14
Cruise	-	5	-	3	7
Theme Park	-	2	-	2	6
Special Event	15	3	-	5	5
Row Percentage	20%	72%	8%	197%	187%

- The most common purpose of trip was touring cited by seven out of ten visitors. Touring was particularly popular with Americans (75%) and International visitors (67%).

- Next in order of preference was visiting friends and relatives (30%), wilderness trips (30%) and outdoors trips (29%). The combination of the outdoors and wilderness had a particularly strong appeal in the Peace River Region. Americans were the most inclined to be in the region on an outdoors trip (34%), while International visitors were there for wilderness/adventure purposes (70%). Equally as significant was the very low numbers of Canadians going to the region for wilderness/adventure purposes (4%).

PARTY COMPOSITION OF VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

PARTY COMPOSITION	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
1 Adult	5%	11%	20%	11%	14%
2 Adults	48	57	80	57	52
3 Adults	5	3	-	3	5
4 or More Adults	5	11	-	9	10
Adult(s) and 1-2 Ch.	29	15	-	16	15
Adult(s) and 3+ Ch.	10	3	-	4	3
Row Percentage	19%	72%	9%	100%	100%
Average Persons	2.9	2.7	1.8	2.7	2.64

- Two adults travelling together was the most common party composition with 57% falling into this category, slightly higher than the provincial average of 52%.
- Travellers with children comprised one in five parties at 20% with Canadians being the most likely to be travelling with children (37%).

FIRST VISIT TO B.C. BY VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

RESPONSE	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
No	87%	73%	70%	76%	73%
Yes	13	27	30	24	27
Row Percentage	20%	72%	8%	100%	100%

- Just one-quarter (24%) of visitors to the Peace River-Alaska Highway region were making their virst trip to B.C.
- First time visitors were more common among International visitors (30%) and Americans (27%) than Canadians.

NUMBER OF TRIPS TO B.C. IN THE PAST THREE YEARS BY VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

NO. OF TRIPS	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
None	21%	28%	-	24%	19%
1	8	20	57%	19	15
2	12	33	43	28	21
3	27	10	-	13	15
4-5	5	7	-	6	11
6 or more	27	4	-	9	19
Row Percentage	25%	66%	7%	100%	100%
Average (trips)	4.2	1.7	1.4	2.3	3.71

- Visitors to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Region tended to be reasonably frequent visitors to B.C. averaging 2.3 trips over the past three years. Canadians were the most frequent return visitors, averaging 4.2 trips over the past three years.

- Among all visitors to the region, one-quarter had never visited B.C. previously, while one in ten had been to the province more than six times.

VISITED EXPO 86 BY VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

RESPONSE	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
No	53%	77%	100%	73%	68%
Yes	48	23	-	27	32
Row Percentage	23%	69%	8%	100%	100%

- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of visitors to the Peace River Region had not visited Expo 86.

- Expo visitation was highest among Canadians (48%) while no International visitors had been to Expo.

ACCOMMODATION USED BY VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

ACCOMMODATION	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
Hotel	10%	-	-	2%	16%
Motel	12	18	15	16	24
Campground	47	76	64	69	24
Friends/Relatives	32	3	20	10	26
Resort/Lodge	-	1	-	-	4
Cottage/B & B	-	1	-	1	2
Other	-	-	-	-	4
Row Percentage	18%	71%	11%	100%	100%
Total Party-Nights x (100)	195	769	121	1085	57119

- The most frequently used accommodation by visitors to B.C. was the homes of friends and relatives (26%), motels (24%) and campgrounds (24%).
- The most frequently used accommodation by visitors to the Peace River-Alaska Highway Region was campgrounds (69%) with motels a distant second at 16%.
- Campgrounds were particularly popular among American (76%) and International (64%) visitors.

ACTIVITIES PURSUED BY VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION

ACTIVITIES	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
Shopping	21%	21%	42%	23%	37%
Tour	1	4	23	5	11
Sightseeing	33	44	40	42	50
Passing Through	18	56	32	47	21
Business	27	2	-	6	8
Outdoor Activities	19	21	41	23	28
Sporting Activities	10	13	33	14	11
Nightlife	6	6	10	7	9
Other Activities	4	3	-	3	4
Beach/Lakeshore	19	22	18	21	27
Museum/Gallery	21	18	20	19	11
Historic Site	15	18	20	18	14
Amusement Park/Fair	6	1	10	3	4
Gardens/Parks	3	9	5	7	25
Friends/Relatives	35	13	48	21	26
Other	-	1	-	1	3
Sporting Event	7	-	-	2	2
Festival	2	2	-	2	3
Cultural Performance	-	3	-	2	3
Other Event	4	2	-	2	1
Row Percentage	18%	72%	10%	267%	298%
Total Party-Nights x (100)	208	844	121	1173	56715

- The most popular activities for visitors to Peace River Region were sightseeing (42%), shopping (23%), outdoor activities (23%) and beach/lakeshore activities (21%). Of particular significance were the large number of visitors who were passing through the region (47%).

- The activities that were relatively more significant in the Peace River Region than in the province were visiting museums/galleries, visiting historic sites, and sporting activities.

- Visiting friends and relatives was particularly popular with International visitors (48%), while passing through (56%) was the main reason Americans were in the region.

EXPENDITURES BY VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY

(PER PARTY PER DAY)

CATEGORY	CANADA	U.S.A.	INT'L	REGIONAL TOTAL	B.C. TOTAL
Accommodation	$11.68	$16.55	$14.39	$15.50	$37.28
Auto Transportation	24.83	35.59	43.53	34.28	15.19
Other Tranportation	1.76	.72	1.78	.98	6.48
Package/Cruise	-	10.14	-	7.63	10.19
Restaurants	10.98	13.54	12.08	12.97	26.75
Groceries	8.50	9.07	18.06	9.62	7.89
Recreation/ Entertainment	3.69	1.36	.32	1.69	526
Shopping/Souvenirs	5.37	6.39	6.58	6.22	18.88
Other	4.14	2.18	7.90	2.93	4.87
Total Expenditure per party per day*	$70.96	$94.43	$104.65	$91.04	$131.88
Party Size	2.9	2.7	1.8	2.7	2.64
Total Expenditure per person per day*	$24.47	$34.97	$58.14	$33.72	$49.95

- o The average party expenditure of visitors to the Peace River-Alaska Highway region was $91, while the average per person expenditure was $34.
- o International visitors tended to spend the most, both per party at $105 and per person $58.
- o The largest expense category was automobile transportation at $34 per party per day, followed by accommodation at $16.

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* Totals may not add due to rounding of individual expenditure items and due to analytical techniques based on questionnaire responses recorded to the nearest dollar.

"BEST" ASPECTS OF EACH REGION

RESPONSE	SOUTHWEST B.C.	VANCOUVER ISLAND	OKANAGAN SMILKAMEEN	KOOTENAY COUNTRY	B.C. ROCKIES	HIGH COUNTRY	CARIBOO	NORTH BY N.W.	PEACE RIVER-ALASKA	B.C. TOTAL
Scenery	49%	51%	38%	65%	51%	52%	58%	54%	49%	46%
Mountains	9	6	7	6	16	7	-	15	6	9
Lakes	13	15	19	14	14	14	11	5	8	13
Gardens	9	10	3	2	1	9	-	15	6	5
Fruits	5	6	14	7	-	3	-	-	-	4
Parks	5	8	3	6	11	4	-	4	-	4
Clean	1	1	5	-	2	1	-	10	1	3
Weather	21	28	49	38	30	19	4	7	20	24
Family	13	7	25	43	8	10	4	5	14	15
Friendly	21	23	17	9	24	21	20	33	26	20
Recreation	9	10	22	5	21	5	25	2	12	13
Food	9	9	9	7	7	7	11	16	6	9
Accommodation	9	4	6	9	7	9	-	21	8	8
Shopping	2	3	-	1	5	1	-	21	-	3
Campgrounds	4	4	8	-	15	7	15	4	12	9
Wilderness	3	4	-	-	7	6	11	-	6	4
Outdoors	11	12	5	19	26	9	15	16	-	10
Relaxing	9	8	6	6	5	6	10	3	11	6
Gen. Pretty	12	7	7	6	4	5	8	21	9	6
Gen. Touring	4%	2%	9%	-	4%	2%	11%	9%	-	4%

- Mentioned most often as the "best" aspects of the Peace River region were the scenery (49%), friendly people (26%) and the weather (20%).
- The "best" aspects of British Columbia were generally the same categories, but their overall significance was lower.
- Ranking lower in the opinions of visitors tothe region than the overall perception of the province were mountains, lakes, parks, weather, and cleanliness.

INTEREST IN VISITING REGIONS BY SEASON

REGION	SEASON			
	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER
Southwestern B.C.	34%	68%	36%	22%
Vancouver Island	39	67	35	23
Okanagan Smilkameen	24	82	25	19
Kootenay Country	12	85	3	24
B.C. Rockies	28	83	16	24
High Country	30	79	23	16
Cariboo Chilcotin	12	100	50	18
North by N.W.	15	74	35	9
Peace River-Alaska	55	73	39	23
Total	34%	74%	33%	20%

- The Peace River-Alaska Highway was perceived as an appropriate location to visit in the spring by over one-half of summer visitors.
- Three-quarters of existing visitors would be interested in visiting in the summer and 39% in the fall.
- Winter was seen as a season to visit the region by 23% of summer visitors.

COMPARISON OF VISITORS TO PEACE RIVER-ALASKA HIGHWAY REGION BETWEEN 1979 AND 1987

ORIGIN	1979		1987	
	PEACE RIVER	B.C.	PEACE RIVER	B.C.
Alberta	46%	33%	12%	19%
Saskatchewan	7	5	1	3
Manitoba	1	2	1	2
Ontario	5	6	1	7
Quebec	-	1	-	2
Other Canada	2	1	4	1
Total Canada	61	47	19	34
Washington	4	18	9	14
Oregon	2	5	6	6
California	5	11	14	13
Other West. U.S.	7	6	31	12
Other U.S.	18	7	14	12
Total U.S.	36	47	74	57
Europe	2	4	8	7
Asia	-	1	-	1
Australia/N.Z.	1	1	-	2
Other World	-	-	-	1
Total International	3%	6%	8%	11%

- o There has been a major shift in the significance of Alberta as an origin for the Peace River Region, dropping from 46% in 1979 to 12% in 1987. Declines were also registered from other provinces for a total decrease from 61% to 19% in 1987.

- o A corresponding increase has been registered in American visitors, jumping from 36% in 1979 to 74% in 1987. Much of this increase has been registered by California and the other western states.